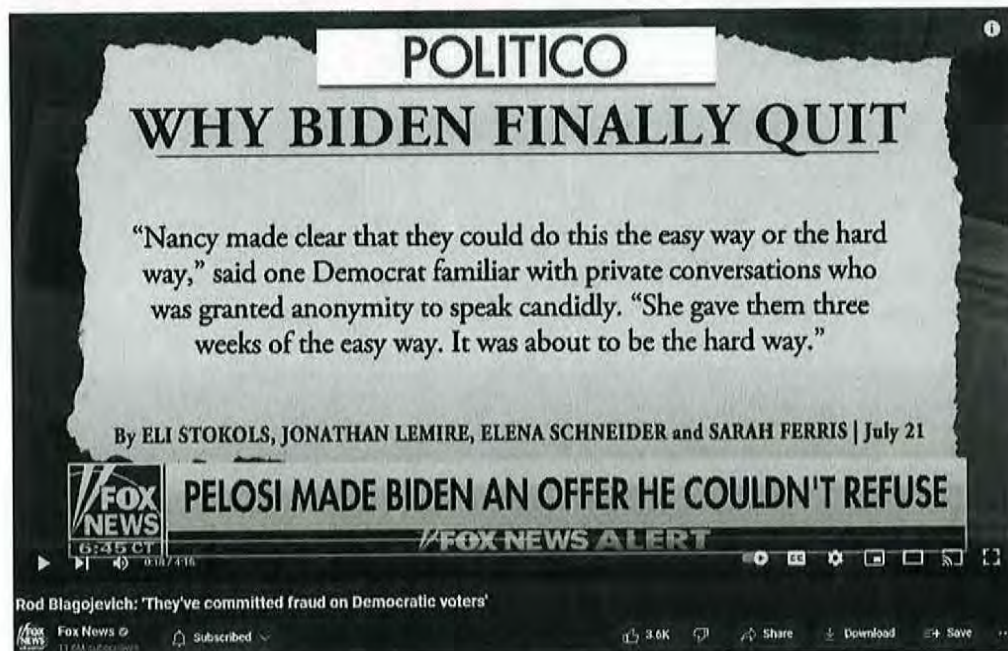




Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "Ok, a lot of inquiring minds out there wondering, how was Biden's ouster from the campaign actually engineered. Well, according to Politico, Nancy Pelosi made clear that the Biden's could do this the easy way, or the hard way. She gave them three weeks of the easy way, and it was about to be the hard way."

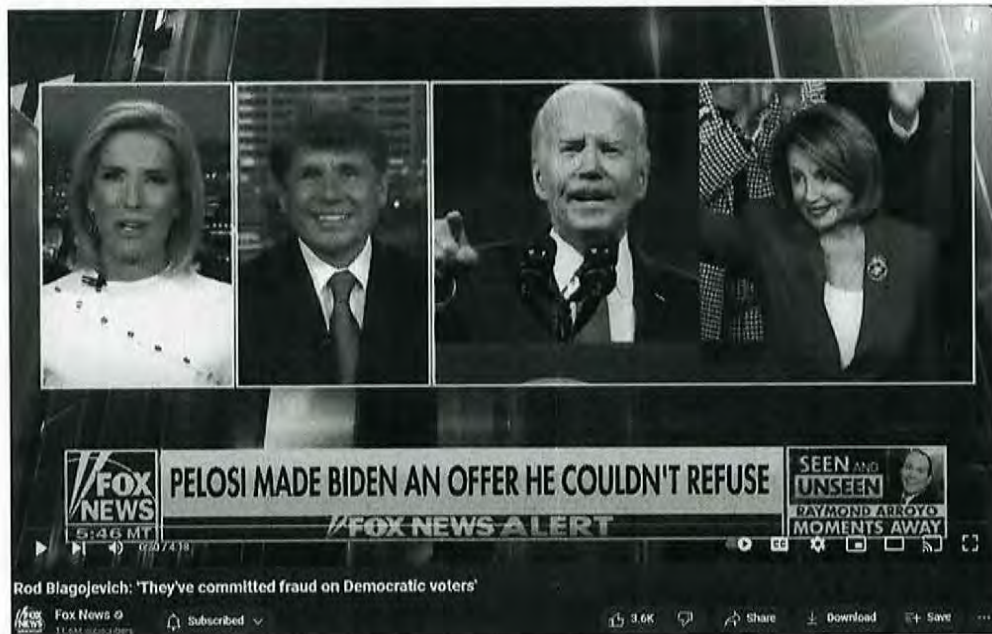


Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "Joining us now, Rod Blagojevich Former Governor of Illinois. Rod, good to see you tonight, wow!"



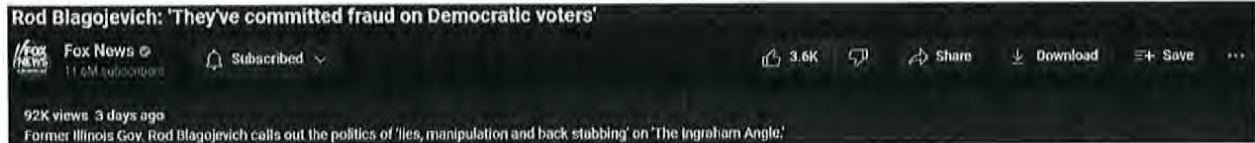


Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "This sounds like, uh, she made Biden an offer he couldn't refuse."



Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "Well it's funny she's not from Chicago, but there's a lot of Chicago politics in what just happened to President Biden. Um, Obama is an expert at it and he learned well. Both Obama and I came up in Chicago politics, I've known him since 1995. We rose up together, and uh, and then I was brought to ruin by that kind of





politics, and it's the politics of lies, it's the politics of manipulation, it's the politics of backstabbing, and it all comes out of the backroom. And, uh, you know today's, new, Democrat political bosses are not the, cigar chomping guy with the pinky ring. They are, now, you know, impressive looking, appealing people like Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama. Because they did this him, there's no question about it. I know exactly what they did and how they did it, and I saw it coming weeks in advance. The only mistake I made was I thought, oh uh, Biden would have the fortitude and the backbone to resist that and not quit. But, uh not everybody's" –

Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "Whattaya think..."

- Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "like Donald Trump."

Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "Yeah, whattaya think they might have, said to him? I mean, I, they've, they've known the polls have been pretty grim for a long time, so I'm not buying the, **we showed him a binder full of polls**, I don't buy that. I think there was something else involved here. When it, the Obamas, or the, eh Pelosi, when they're involved it's not as straightforward."

Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "Well whatever skeleton that, skeletons in the closet that Joe Biden has, and my suspicion is, he's got closets full, because he's been in politics and had been in Washinton since 1973. Pelosi knows them, Obama knows them, they vetted him, Obama's presidential campaign did. So they got all the dirt on, uh, Biden, and my guess is that, that stuff was whispered to him, either directly or through 3rd parties. It was probably whispered to Jill Biden, maybe even to the son. So on the one hand they used the stick, on the other hand they used the carrot. And the carrot is, probably, all kinds of things that they promised him, if he agreed to, quietly step out, and get out of the, get out of the way, get out of the race. And what they did, basically, Laura, is, they've committed a fraud on Democratic voters, they made suckers out of the 14,000,000, Democrat primary" –

Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "Oh... gosh."

- Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "voters who voted for Biden. Um, and..."

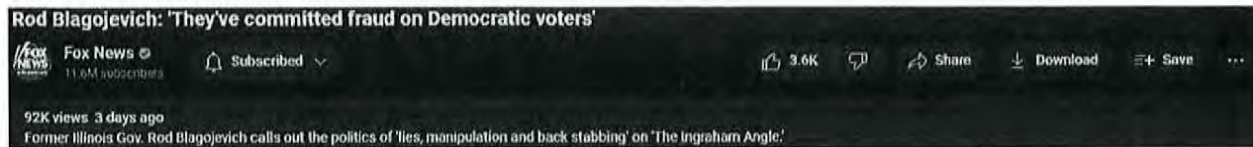
Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "But, Rod."

- Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "...so this is another..."

Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "But, Rod."

- Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "Yes?"





Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "But, Rod, I have to say, Kamala Harris, she came out today, shows up at Biden Headquarters, this is what she said..."



Vice President, Kamala Harris: "... [what] kind of country do we want to live in? A country of freedom, compassion, and rule of law (person in spectators 'YES'), or, a country of chaos, fear, and hate? (few people in spectators 'NO'))"



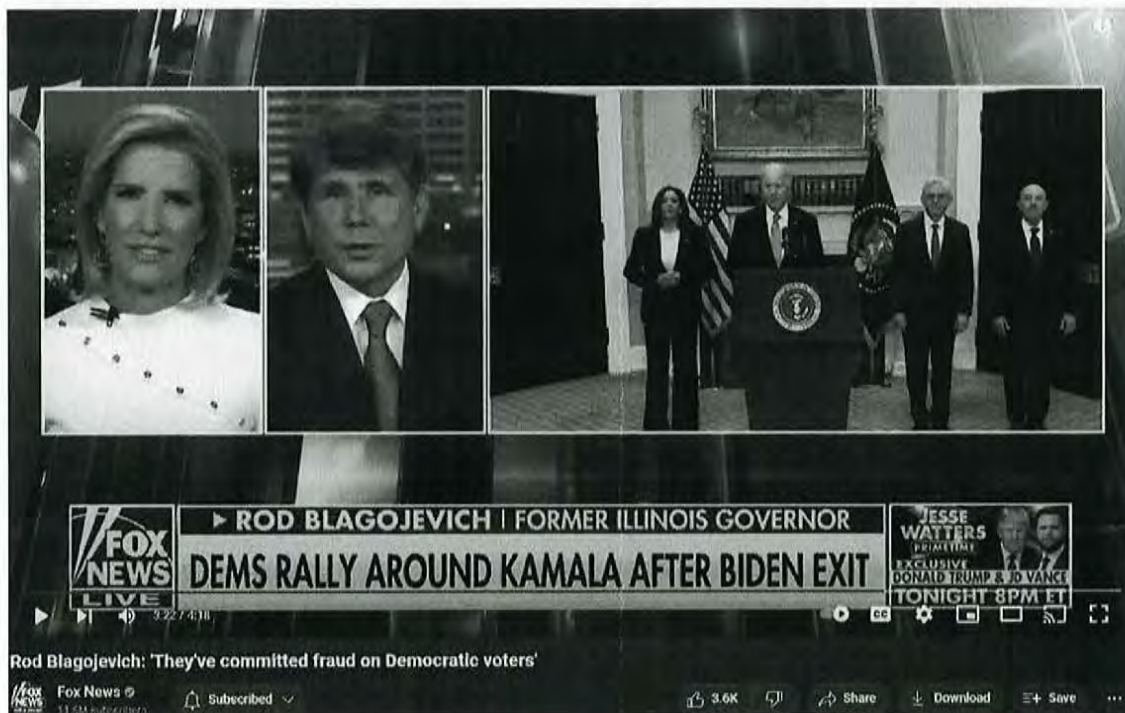
Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "(Impression of a 'nasal, and/or robotic voice') Chaos, fear and hate."

Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "(normal voice) Oh my gah, oh my, that's painful. Alright, so, it's, it's, the same ol', so it's the same, it's what Biden was saying, basically, it's no different. It's just, she's gonna be 60 on election day, and, he would have been 81."

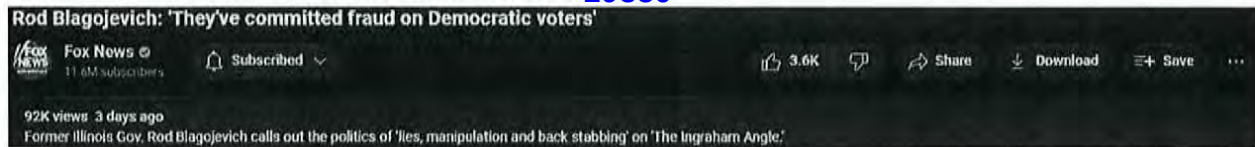




Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "The Democrats today are the biggest hypocrites in American political history. This is the party that says they're running to save Democracy, yet they weaponized the Department of Justice to go after Trump."







Former Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich: "And now, Biden, was thrown out of office, basically, essentially told not to run. By, out, being maneuvered by Obama in the backrooms, and doing what they did to get him to step out, and not run, and disenfranchise the voters in the primaries who voted for him. They're the ones who are a threat to Democracy, and, this is among the reasons why it is critical, for the American people to vote for President Trump. To stop this, as, particularly the weaponization, and this is comin' from a guy who was a Democrat and the first Governor to endorse Obama back in 2008. We go way back together, and I know what's at stake here, and I know what they did to me, and I see what they're doin' to Trump, and I see how they're lying to the American People."



Fox News Anchor, Laura Ingraham: "And mostly the American people are the ones who are really gonna suffer if this thing goes forward, Rod, thank you so much, appreciate [you.]"





2 WEEKS AGO

## Biden does some damage control with House Dems — but not enough

At least two Democrats called on the president to drop out after a mostly steady press conference performance.

By **DANIELLA DIAZ, NICHOLAS WU** and **SARAH FERRIS**  
07/11/2024, 9:01PM ET



President Joe Biden delivered a steady performance at a high-stakes press conference Thursday but still fell short of assuring jittery Democrats concerned about his future, prolonging painful questions across the party.

But after the press conference wrapped up, several more Democratic lawmakers called for Biden to step aside — a sign his problems are far from over.

"Today I ask President Biden to withdraw from the presidential campaign," Rep. Scott Peters (D-Calif.), wrote in a statement obtained by POLITICO. "The stakes are high, and we are on a losing course."



Just minutes earlier, Rep. Jim Himes (D-Conn.), the top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, also called on Biden to step aside in a post on X. And purple-district Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-Ill.) wrote on X: "I am hopeful President Biden will step aside in his campaign for President."

Even as Biden successfully fielded 50 minutes of questions on an array of dense issues, many Democrats privately feared his several verbal gaffes would be what stood out the most. That includes one in which he mistakenly referred to "Vice President Trump" instead of Kamala Harris.

"Unreal," said one House Democrat watching the appearance, responding to the flub but ultimately had a mixed review. "Obviously much better second half."

Another Democrat, who was following Biden's remarks from a plane Biden's remarks from a plane, texted about the Trump moment: "Ouch."

"Overall he sounded coherent but calling Z — President Putin and Harris — VP Trump overshadows the rest of his time," that lawmaker added. Democrats were granted anonymity to speak candidly about their reactions to the press conference.

Still, it wasn't as bad as some Democrats feared. Biden flexed his foreign policy chops — including his role in expanding NATO — and defended his record of legislative accomplishments. Those moments, as well as a jab at Trump's golf game, drew positive reviews from Democrats watching.

"Holy shit — he's on fire," texted one aide as Biden lit into Trump's record.

And asked about his ability to do the job, the president said there's "no indication" he's slowing down and said he has more work to do: "I want to finish it."



"Looks and sounds 100x better than he did at debate," one House Democrat said in a text, adding that Biden was "almost" as good as his last State of the Union appearance, which drew no complaints from his party.

"Talked too long. But if this had been the debate none of the last two weeks would've happened," that member added.

The whole thing could put Democrats in an even more awkward position than before. Despite deep discontent with their nominee, the performance wasn't bad enough to trigger party-wide movement toward Harris or others. While at least a half-dozen Democrats had prepared statements to come out against Biden if he had tanked in the press conference, it remained unclear, as of Thursday night, whether it had met their bar.

Many Democrats told POLITICO they didn't catch the press conference in real time for various reasons, including pre-scheduled travel, fundraisers or other personal reasons. Both chambers of Congress had left D.C. earlier Thursday, and won't return for more than a week.

Hours earlier, the president's mix-up between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin at a NATO event also elicited groans in the party.

"He has no margin for error," one House Democrat said in response. Another House Democrat, when told about the Zelenskyy-Putin mistake by a reporter, did not believe it.

"No he didn't," said the Democrat. "Christ."

One senior Democratic aide summed up their reaction bluntly: "It's time to suck it up and push the old man over the finish line."

*Meredith Lee Hill contributed reporting.*



Lead Art: President Joe Biden speaks at a news conference Thursday July 11, 2024, on the final day of the NATO summit in Washington. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin) | AP



2 WEEKS AGO

## Two more House Democrats call for Biden to drop out of presidential race

More than a dozen House Democrats have called on the president to exit the race, and others are raising questions about his fitness for office.



**NICHOLAS WU**

07/11/2024, 4:29PM ET

UPDATED: 07/11/2024, 5:16PM ET



A pair of House Democrats — Reps. Ed Case and Greg Stanton — became the latest lawmakers to call for President Joe Biden to drop his reelection bid.

“For the sake of American democracy, and to continue to make progress on



our shared priorities, I believe it is time for the President to step aside as our nominee," Stanton (D-Ariz.) said in a statement.

"I do not believe President Biden should continue his candidacy for re-election as President," Case (D-Hawaii) said in his own statement.

The two lawmakers are the newest of more than a dozen Democratic lawmakers to push for Biden to step aside, with likely more to come. A Thursday closed-door meeting with the president's aides left skeptical senators unmoved, and as POLITICO first reported, at least half a dozen other lawmakers are preparing to publicly break with Biden if his highly anticipated solo press conference Thursday night goes poorly.

Two other Democrats came close to calling for Biden to step off the ticket and raised more questions about his fitness for office.

Trump-district Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-Wash.) said in a statement she doubted the president's "judgment" about his health, fitness for office and own ability to govern.

"Americans deserve to feel their president is fit enough to do the job. The crisis of confidence in the President's leadership needs to come to an end. The President should do what he knows is right for the country and put the national interest first," she said in a statement.

And Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-Mass.) said on WPRI his voters "have deep and unanswered doubts" about Biden's ability to win the election and to serve another four years in office.





2 WEEKS AGO

## Senate meeting with Biden aides fails to convince skeptical Dems

Those Senate Democrats with concerns said their feelings hadn't changed following the Thursday afternoon meeting with top advisers to Joe Biden.

By ANTHONY ADRAGNA, URSULA PERANO, JORDAIN CARNEY and KATHERINE TULLY-MCMANUS

07/11/2024, 3:34PM ET



Top advisers to President Joe Biden met with Democratic senators on Thursday to try to reassure lawmakers nervous about his viability in November. It didn't work.

Lawmaker calls for Biden to step aside have swelled again this week — with Reps. Hillary Scholten (D-Mich.) and Brad Schneider (D-Ill.) bringing the total number of Democrats to 12 and others poised to follow suit if the president stumbles again. Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) became the first senator to demand Biden stand down on Wednesday night.



The most outspoken critics of the president continuing his reelection bid appeared unmoved by the session that included senior Biden advisers Mike Donilon and Steve Ricchetti, as well as Biden campaign Chair Jen O'Malley Dillon. Behind closed doors, the group of Democratic senators actively pushed back on assertions from the Biden campaign that the president was on the right track to win this November, according to a person briefed on the meeting.

After it concluded, Welch said the meeting didn't change his mind.

"I have great respect for their team. It doesn't change my point of view," he told reporters.

Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), who said publicly he feared a Democratic wipeout with Biden atop the ticket, called the session a "good discussion," but said his concerns remained about the incumbent being a drag on other races.

In interviews with more than two dozen Democratic senators following the meeting at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, staunch Biden backers reiterated their support. But the wide swath of Democratic senators who have either remained mostly silent or expressed some reservations did not seem reassured following the meeting.

"Joe Biden really has to bring it to Donald Trump," Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said in a brief interview. "I still need to see the data and analytics that show me the path to victory."

Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-Colo.) echoed that sentiment: "He's got to demonstrate that the debate was just a bad night. ... There's a clock running."

Then there was a loud silence from other senators. Normally chatty senior Democrat conference members like Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.), Ron Wyden (Ore.), Chris Murphy (Conn.), Jack Reed (R.I.) and Angus King (I-Maine) all declined to comment on the meeting, with several lawmakers indicating they



agreed not to speak with the media. Several senators declined to say if anyone in the closed-door meeting had called for Biden to step aside.

“It was very clear that we were asked not to say anything,” said Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.).

Among those who spoke during the meeting were Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), who’s expressed concern about Biden’s viability, and Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.), one of his staunchest defenders on Capitol Hill.

“I certainly stood up hard for my friend, our president, Joe Biden,” Coons said.

At least three Democrats facing reelection this fall — Jon Tester (Mont.), Sherrod Brown (Ohio) and Tim Kaine (Va.) — did not attend the session.

Prominent centrist Sen. Joe Manchin (I-W.Va.), who toyed with an independent presidential bid and formally left the Democratic Party earlier this year after announcing his retirement from the Senate, said he planned to speak with Biden over the weekend. He said the Biden aides gave no indication he would drop out, but answered lots of questions from senators.

Despite mounting concerns elsewhere, it's clear Biden still has strong backers from some Democratic senators.

“In my view, President Biden is going to run for president and Biden is going to win,” said leading progressive Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). “And he's going to win because the contrast between his policies and Donald Trump's are very, very clear.”

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), a member of Democratic leadership, said Biden officials laid out an “aggressive plan.” And Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) said of those Democrats nervous about Biden’s mental fitness for another term in office: “I think the president will answer those concerns”



during his press conference following the NATO summit on Thursday afternoon.

Lawmakers will have fled Washington by then, out of town for a week-long recess as the Republican convention commences next week.

Lead Art: Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), who said publicly he feared a Democratic wipeout with Joe Biden atop the ticket, called the session a "good discussion," but said his concerns remained about the incumbent being a drag on other races. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

2 WEEKS AGO

Rep. Brad Schneider is calling for President Joe Biden to step aside as the Democratic presidential nominee. He's now the twelfth Democratic lawmaker and eleventh House member to call for a new nominee.

"I love President Biden. I am forever grateful for his leadership and service to our nation. The time has come, however, for President Biden to heroically pass the torch to a new generation of leadership to guide us to the future he has enabled and empowered us to pursue," he said in a statement.

The Illinois Democrat has been a staunch Israel ally in the caucus and is vying for the top spot in the centrist New Democrat Coalition.



**NICHOLAS WU**  
07/11/2024, 2:50PM ET



2 WEEKS AGO

Sen. Joe Manchin (I-W.Va.) told reporters that he intends to speak with President Joe Biden this weekend, amid concerns over his future at the top of the ticket.



Manchin's comments came after Senate Democrats met with Biden campaign officials Thursday afternoon. He said senators asked the Biden advisers a litany of questions, but declined to say if anyone had called on the president to step aside.

JORDAIN CARNEY  
07/11/2024, 2:49PM ET



## House Dems prepare to break with Biden if he tanks NATO press conference

At least a half-dozen lawmakers are preparing to go public against the president if he has another self-dubbed "bad night," according to six people familiar with discussions.





Democratic lawmakers are making contingency plans in case Joe Biden tanks his highly anticipated solo press conference later Thursday, with at least a half-dozen lawmakers preparing to go public against the president, according to six people familiar with discussions.

Three of those lawmakers' offices have already drafted statements, according to two people who have been briefed on conversations.

The lawmakers are among a large faction of Democrats who have so far remained largely silent about Biden's future despite major concerns about his ability to defeat former President Donald Trump. The people familiar with discussions declined to specify on record the members who were preparing statements against Biden or ready to do so.

"This is a moment that will make a difference," said Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), who is retiring from his Michigan swing seat this fall. He noted the unscripted press conference, occurring at the end of the three-day NATO gathering in D.C., will be Biden's first chance after a shaky ABC News interview with George Stephanopoulos to convince the public he can win. During that interview, Biden dismissed his unnerving debate performance two weeks ago as simply a "bad night."

Among House Democrats, there is a pervasive sense of panic about Biden at the top of the ticket. But there is also a deep divide internally about how to handle the situation.



Many are privately skeptical that there's any number of Democratic defections that would actually convince Biden to leave the ticket, calling it "delusional" thinking. Others insist that a large-enough groundswell could make a difference, pointing to party leaders like House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who could relay concerns to Biden himself. Pelosi and Jeffries huddled on the House floor for an extended period of time Thursday morning, according to one lawmaker who witnessed the exchange.

Regardless, all Democrats agree on one thing: The party is running out of time to come up with a strategy to help them defeat Trump and take back the House in November.

"[Biden's NATO presser] is part of the bigger picture of whether he's able to be unscripted and answer questions," said Rep. Brittany Pettersen (D-Col.), who has not definitively backed Biden. "We'll see how today goes, but it's a small part of where we are."

Others, even Biden backers, are doubtful that a good performance by the president will sway Democrats much at all. The damage has already been done, they argue.

"The main make-or-break is occurring right now and we will, as members of Congress, continue to analyze who's the best person at the top of the ticket,"



said Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.), who's supportive of the president.

Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Ill.), who's already called for Biden to step aside, was more blunt: "The cake is baked."

"What if he has a great day and a bad day tomorrow? Do you really want a campaign where you have that uncertainty through the most tense moments?" Quigley said.

And Biden's team has another problem on the Hill: A growing sense of frustration that his campaign team has not been responsive enough to lawmakers' concerns. Several Democrats told POLITICO they are frustrated that campaign officials haven't responded to members asking them to address concerns about Biden's strategy.

"I've asked the campaign for a plan and they've just not been responsive," said Rep. Scott Peters (D-Calif.), who has said he's close to saying Biden should quit. "So I think they've sent their message to me."

And Quigley said he hadn't heard from the Biden campaign or the White House either, though he added: "I'm not the one they need to convince."

Lead Art: Top row, from left: Earl Blumenauer, Ed Case, Angie Craig and Lloyd Doggett. Middle row, from left: Raúl M. Grijalva, Seth Moulton, Pat Ryan, Brad Schneider, Hillary Scholten and Mikie Sherrill. Bottom row, from left: Adam Smith, Greg Stanton, Mike Quigley and Peter Welch.

2 WEEKS AGO

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), a member of former President Donald Trump's vice president short list, said it doesn't matter whether the Republican ticket runs against incumbent President Joe Biden or "a real-world liberal like [Vice President] Kamala Harris," projecting confidence in the party's electoral prospects against any Democrat.



Even as questions swirl about Biden's age, Rubio also said he isn't bothered that Trump is just three years younger than the incumbent. "It's not an age thing as much as it is a mental acuity [thing] and the energy and the focus," he told reporters. "The guy's awake at midnight and he's awake at six and five in the morning."



**ANTHONY ADRAGNA**  
07/11/2024, 12:26PM ET

